2026 USDA EXPLANATORY NOTES – FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

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PREFACE

This publication summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Throughout this publication any reference to the "Budget" is in regard to the 2026 Budget, unless otherwise noted. All references to years refer to fiscal year, except where specifically noted. The budgetary tables throughout this document show actual amounts for 2022 and 2023, Full-Year Continuing Resolution levels for 2024, and the President's Budget request for 2025. Amounts for 2024 estimated levels include: non-enacted amounts such as Full-Time Equivalent levels, fleet levels, information technology investment levels, recovery levels, transfers in and out, balances available end of year, and obligation levels.

Throughout this publication, the "2018 Farm Bill" is used to refer to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Most programs funded by the 2018 Farm Bill are funded through 2025, as extended by the American Relief Act, 2025 (P.L. 118-158, Division D). Amounts shown in 2024 and 2025 for most Farm Bill programs reflect those confirmed in the baseline.

Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, sequestration is included in the numbers for mandatory programs in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

In tables throughout this document, amounts equal to zero (0) are displayed as dashes (-). Amounts less than 0.5 and greater than zero are rounded and shown as a zero (0). This display treatment is used to prevent the masking of non-zero amounts that do not round up to one (1).

AGENCY-WIDE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Secretary of Agriculture established the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) on June 17, 1981, pursuant to legislative authority contained in 5 U.S.C. 301 that permits the Secretary to issue regulations governing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of FSIS is to protect the public's health by ensuring the safety of meat, poultry, and processed egg products.

FSIS inspection is authorized by the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) as amended, the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA) and the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA). FSIS ensures that meat, poultry and egg products are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled through inspection and regulation of these products so that they are suitable for commercial distribution for human consumption. FSIS also enforces the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA) through the program, which requires that all livestock at federally inspected establishments be handled and slaughtered in a humane way.

FSIS conducts inspection activities at federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg product establishments; and for State programs, the agency ensures that State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs have standards that are at least equal to Federal standards. FSIS also ensures that meat and poultry products imported to the United States are produced under standards equivalent to U.S. inspection standards.

FSIS' science-based inspection system, known as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, places emphasis on the identification, prevention, and control of foodborne hazards. HACCP requirements include meeting sanitation, facility, operational standards, and other prerequisite programs to control pathogen contamination and to produce safe and unadulterated food.

During 2024, the agency maintained headquarters offices in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area; 10 district offices; laboratories in Athens, Georgia, St. Louis, Missouri, and Albany, California; the Financial Services Center in Urbandale, Iowa; and a nationwide network of inspection personnel in 7,100 federally regulated establishments in 50 States, the District of Columbia, N. Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa and the Virgin Islands. Much of the agency's work is conducted in cooperation with Federal, State, and municipal agencies, as well as private industry.

As of September 30, 2024, the agency employment totaled 8,403 permanent full-time employees, including 760 in Headquarters and 7,643 in the field. FSIS employed 8,414 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) as of September 30, 2024. This included other-than-permanent employees in addition to permanent full-time ones.

FSIS funding is broken out into the following categories:

1. Federal Food Safety and Inspection: Expenses associated with operations at all federally inspected meat, poultry and egg product establishments.

2. State Food Safety and Inspection: Expenses associated with state inspected establishments and state-run programs.

3. International Food Safety and Inspection: Expenses associated with import and export operations and certifications.

4. Public Health Data Communications Infrastructure System (PHDCIS): Expenses associated with providing public health communications and information systems infrastructure and connectivity.

OIG AND GAO REPORTS

Table FSIS-1. Completed GAO Reports

ID	Date	Title	Result
GAO-24-601-0006-31	1/26/2024	Final Action Verification of Food Safety and Inspection Service's Oversight of the New Poultry Inspection System	No recommendations directed at FSIS
GAO-24-106327	11/16/2023	Federal Spending Transparency: Opportunities Exist to Improve COVID-19 and Other Subaward Data on USASpending.gov	No recommendations directed at FSIS
GAO-24-106142	11/29/2023	Biodefense: National Biosurveillance Integration Center Has Taken Steps to Address Challenges, but Could Better Assess Results	No recommendations directed at FSIS

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND FTES

Table FSIS-2. Available Funds and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs
Salaries and Expenses:								
Discretionary Appropriations........	$1,158,266	8,364	$1,190,709	8,303	$1,214,009	8,110	$1,205,209	8,000
Supplemental Appropriations.......	29,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Discretionary Appropriations...	1,158,266	8,364	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Total Supplemental Appropriations ..	29,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Adjusted Appropriation	1,187,966	8,364	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Balance Available, SOY..................	70,602	-	909	-	8,833	-	-	-
Rescinded Balances	-55,710	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other.........................	1,691	-	2,813	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	1,204,549	8,364	1,194,431	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Lapsing Balances.........................	-115	-	-120	-	-	-	-	-
Balance Available, EOY..................	-909	-	-8,833	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations	1,203,525	8,364	1,185,478	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Balance Available, SOY..................	70,602	-	909	-	8,833	-	-	-
Recoveries, Other.........................	1,691	-	9,927	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available, Other Funding	72,293	-	10,836	-	8,833	-	-	-
Lapsing Balances.........................	-115	-	-120	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	-909	-	-8,833	-	-	-	-	-
Total Obligations, Other funding ...	71,269	-	1,883	-	8,833	-	-	-
Total Obligations, FSIS	1,274,794	8,364	1,187,361	8,303	1,231,675	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Other USDA:								
Office of Chief Financial Officer.....	764	-	20,394	-	-	-	-	-
Office of Secretary	609	-	577	-	-	-	-	-
USDA Departmental Admin..........	-	-	37	-	-	-	-	-
Foreign Agriculture Service..........	45	-	11	-	-	-	-	-
Animal & Plant Health Service......	203	-	569	-	-	-	-	-
Office of General Counselor	345	-	94	-	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Marketing Service......	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
ARS, Nutrient Data Laboratory	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other USDA...................	1,971	-	21,683	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Agriculture Available	1,278,813	8,364	1,226,950	8,303	1,231,675	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Other Federal Funds:								
Food and Drug Administration......	428	-	719	-	-	-	-	-
US DHS Customs and Border Protect	551	-	103	-	-	-	-	-
Dept of Health & Human Services .	86	-	85	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Other Federal	1,065	-	907	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Federal Funds:								
Meat, Poultry and Egg Products Inspection.............................	209,830	26	226,983	26	229,992	26	229,992	26
Accredited Labs.........................	148	-	235	-	235	-	235	-
Trust Funds	17,886	88	17,773	85	17,847	85	17,847	85
Total, Non-Federal	227,864	114	244,991	111	248,074	111	248,074	111
Total Available, FSIS....................	1,507,742	8,478	1,472,848	8,414	1,479,749	8,221	1,453,283	8,111

PERMANENT POSITIONS BY GRADE AND FTES

Table FSIS-3. Permanent Positions by Grade and FTEs

Item	HQ	Field	2023 Actual Total	HQ	Field	2024 Actual Total	HQ	Field	2025 Estimated Total	HQ	Field	2026 Estimated Total
SES	26	-	26	23	1	24	23	-	23	22	-	22
SL	3	-	3	4	-	4	4	-	4	3	-	3
GS-15	50	25	75	49	27	76	47	27	74	34	26	60
GS-14	189	99	288	179	98	277	169	98	267	119	96	215
GS-13	254	322	576	242	327	569	224	321	545	159	313	472
GS-12	132	814	946	137	776	913	121	765	886	85	750	835
GS-11	46	72	118	34	48	82	31	47	78	22	46	68
GS-10	1	248	249	1	253	254	1	251	252	1	246	247
GS-9	43	4,038	4,081	34	4,272	4,306	26	4,205	4,231	19	4,349	4,368
GS-8	2	469	471	2	454	456	1	450	451	1	441	442
GS-7	40	1,354	1,394	40	1,142	1,182	37	1,112	1,149	27	1,090	1,117
GS-6	9	6	15	11	1	12	10	1	11	7	1	8
GS-5	12	319	331	3	243	246	3	234	237	2	229	231
GS-4	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
Total Permanent	808	7,767	8,575	760	7,643	8,403	698	7,512	8,210	502	7,588	8,090
Total Perm. FT EOY	808	7,767	8,575	760	7,643	8,403	698	7,512	8,210	502	7,588	8,090
FTE	759	7,719	8,478	685	7,729	8,414	623	7,598	8,221	427	7,684	8,111

<u>**VEHICLE FLEET**</u>

Motor Vehicle Fleet

FSIS uses vehicles to deliver mission critical services. Project sites are frequently in locations only accessible through construction zones and off-road areas. Furthermore, specially equipped vehicles are required to transport scientific equipment.

FSIS requires operation and maintenance logs for all its vehicles. Periodic reviews ensure optimal use of each vehicle in the fleet.

Replacement Criteria

FSIS retires or replaces vehicles based upon age, utilization, operating costs, and maintenance costs. FSIS always replaces vehicles with a more efficient and cost-effective model.

Table FSIS-4. Size, Composition, and Annual Costs of Motor Vehicle Fleet

Item	Sedans and Station Wagons	Vans	SUVs	Light Trucks 4X2	Light Trucks 4X4	Medium Duty Vehicles	Buses	Heavy Duty Vehicles	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
2018 End of Year Operating Inventory................................	**2,180**	**79**	**62**	**-**	**-**	**2**	**-**	**-**	**2,323**	**$12,426,226**
2023 End of Year Operating Inventory................................	**2,096**	**25**	**180**	**19**	**8**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2,328**	**15,588,222**
2024 Actual Acquisitions........................	466	-	447	-	2	-	-	-	915	
2024 Actual Disposals	1,004	5	-	3	-	-	-	-	1,012	
2024 End of Year Operating Inventory................................	**1,558**	**20**	**627**	**16**	**10**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2,231**	**17,878,017**
2025 Planned Acquisitions	406	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	406	
2025 Planned Disposals..........................	350	-	-	15	7	-	-	-	372	
2025 End of Year Operating Inventory................................	**1,614**	**20**	**627**	**-**	**3**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2,264**	**21,453,640**
2026 Planned Acquisitions	435	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	435	
2026 Planned Disposals..........................	400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	400	
2026 End of Year Operating Inventory................................	**1,649**	**20**	**627**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2,296**	**25,744,364**

SHARED FUNDING PROJECTS

Table FSIS-5. Shared Funding Projects (thousands of dollars)

Item	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Estimated	2026 Estimated
Working Capital Fund:				
Administrative Services:				
AskUSDA	$1,653	$794	$774	$774
General Counsel Legal Compliance	-	-	46	566
Material Management Service	4,106	4,873	4,126	4,100
Mail and Reproduction Services	990	1,135	756	764
Integrated Procurement Systems	298	278	223	223
Procurement Operations Services	13	16	20	22
Human Resources Enterprise Management Systems	138	857	929	907
Subtotal	7,198	7,953	6,874	7,356
Communications:				
Creative Media & Broadcast Center	194	238	256	271
Finance and Management:				
National Finance Center	2,625	2,758	2,580	2,591
Financial Management Systems	2	2	2	2
Personnel and Document Security	408	470	522	522
Internal Control Support Services	50	60	39	39
Financial Management Support Services	6,245	7,271	6,487	6,486
Subtotal	9,330	10,561	9,630	9,640
Information Technology:				
Client Experience Center	34,475	34,293	35,983	39,720
Department Administration Information Technology Office	-	5	-	-
Enterprise Cybersecurity Services	2,842	4,818	5,323	5,323
Digital Infrastructure Services Center	9,078	11,171	8,478	8,449
Enterprise Network Services	5,803	15,116	12,226	12,682
Subtotal	52,198	65,403	62,010	66,174
Office of the Executive Secretariat	157	165	126	82
Total, Working Capital Fund	69,077	84,320	78,896	83,523
Department-Wide Shared Cost Programs:				
Advisory Committee Liaison Services	5	6	5	5
Agency Partnership Outreach	615	609	616	616
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility	167	216	46	-
Employee Experience	287	308	230	230
Medical Services	123	169	178	178
Office of Customer Experience	268	248	248	248
Physical Security	379	390	474	474
Security Detail	421	443	651	651
Security Operations Program	583	618	606	606
Talent Group	303	275	272	272
TARGET Center	139	134	130	130
TARGET Center NCR Interpreting Services	49	68	60	60
USDA Enterprise Data Analytics Services	424	789	968	932
Virtual University	-	-	-	-
Total, Department-Wide Reimbursable Programs	3,763	4,273	4,484	4,402
E-Gov:				
Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business	7	8	8	8
E-Rulemaking	20	14	19	17
Financial Management Line of Business	1	1	1	1
Geospatial Line of Business	13	13	13	13
Human Resources Line of Business	25	24	24	24
Integrated Acquisition Environment	6	6	6	6
Total, E-Gov	72	66	71	69
Agency Total	72,912	88,659	83,451	87,994

ACCOUNT 1: SALARIES AND EXPENSES

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The appropriations language follows (new language underscored):

Food Safety and Inspection Service

For necessary expenses to carry out services authorized by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, including not to exceed $10,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to section 8 of the Act approved August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1766), $1,205,209,000; and in addition, $1,000,000 may be credited to this account from fees collected for the cost of laboratory accreditation as authorized by section 1327 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 138f): *Provided*, That funds provided for the Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure system shall remain available until expended.

LEAD-OFF TABULAR STATEMENT

Table FSIS-6. Lead-Off Tabular Statement (In dollars)

Item	Amount
Enacted 2025	$1,214,009,000
Change in Appropriation	-8,800,000
Budget Estimate, 2026	1,205,209,000

PROJECT STATEMENTS

Table FSIS-7. Project Statement on Basis of Appropriations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.	Chg Key
Discretionary Approp:											
Federal Food Safety & Inspection	$1,036,888	8,225	$1,066,390	8,168	$1,089,208	7,975	$1,065,208	7,865	-$24,000	-110	(1)
State Food Safety & Inspection	67,131	18	67,462	11	67,641	11	82,841	11	+15,200	-	(2)
International Food Safety & Inspection	18,975	121	20,885	124	21,888	124	21,888	124	-	-	
Public Health Data Communications Infrastructure System (PHDCIS)	35,272	-	35,272	-	35,272	-	35,272	-	-	-	
GP - Tribal Bison	-	-	700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	1,158,266	8,364	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-8,800	-110	
Supplemental Approp:											
Good Fellows Mid-Western Lab Relocation (Division N)	29,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	29,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Appropriation	1,187,966	8,364	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-8,800	-110	
Recoveries, Other	1,691	-	2,813	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Rescinded Balances	-55,710	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bal. Available, SOY	70,602	-	909	-	8,833	-	-	-	-8,833	-	
Total Available	1,204,549	8,364	1,194,431	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-17,633	-110	
Lapsing Balances	-115	-	-120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bal. Available, EOY	-909	-	-8,833	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Obligations	1,203,525	8,364	1,185,478	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-17,633	-110	

Table FSIS-8. Project Statement on Basis of Obligations (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

Item	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs	Inc. or Dec.	FTE Inc. or Dec.
Discretionary Obligations:										
Federal Food Safety & Inspection	$1,036,848	8,225	$1,064,041	8,168	$1,089,208	7,975	$1,065,208	7,865	-$24,000	-110
State Food Safety & Inspection	67,084	18	70,400	11	67,641	11	82,841	11	+15,200	-
International Food Safety & Inspection...............	18,947	121	20,876	124	21,888	124	21,888	124	-	-
Public Health Data Communications Infrastructure System (PHDCIS)...	38,891	-	29,688	-	43,722	-	35,272	-	-8,450	-
Subtotal Disc Obligations	1,161,770	8,364	1,185,005	8,303	1,222,459	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-17,250	-110
Mandatory Obligations:										
American Rescue Plan	11,404	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Mand Obligations.............................	11,404	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplemental Obligations:										
Good Fellows Mid-Western Lab Relocation (Division N)	29,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHV Incentives Carryover	651	-	473	-	383	-	-	-	-383	-
Subtotal Supp Obligations	30,351	-	473	-	383	-	-	-	-383	-
Total Obligations	1,203,525	8,364	1,185,478	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-17,633	-110
Add back:										
Lapsing Balances	115	-	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balances Available, EOY:										
PHDCIS	521	-	8,450	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHV Incentives...	388	-	383	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Bal. Available, EOY	909	-	8,833	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Available	1,204,549	8,364	1,194,431	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-17,633	-110
Less:										
Recoveries, Other	-1,691	-	-2,813	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rescinded Balances	55,710	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, SOY...	-70,602	-	-909	-	-8,833	-	-	-	+8,833	-
Total Appropriation	1,187,966	8,364	1,190,709	8,303	1,214,009	8,110	1,205,209	8,000	-8,800	-110

JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGES

A decrease of $8,800,000 for FSIS ($1,214,009,000 available in 2025).

In pursuit of streamlining workforce efforts, facilities, and other government efficiencies, FSIS has reduced FTE's from 8,303 to 8,000 due to modernization and other efficiencies. The Budget proposes discretionary funding of $1.205 billion, reducing base costs by $24 million and requesting an increase for reimbursement to states of $15 million for their inspection programs, resulting in a net decrease of $8.8 million below the 2025 enacted appropriation. The 2026 budget includes a pay freeze and promotes efforts to demonstrate cost savings. The budget will also allow FSIS to conduct statutorily required food safety inspections at approximately 7,100 federally inspected establishments at necessary staffing levels to protect public health, verify truthful and accurate labeling, and ensure a safe food supply. Additionally, FSIS will conduct statutorily required food safety reinspection of imported meat, poultry, and egg products to protect American consumers from unsafe food and protect producers of American livestock and poultry from foreign animal diseases. The budget supports deregulatory actions while maintaining food safety, such as removing barriers to increased line speeds in poultry and swine establishments, to increase economic growth in rural America and ensure a safe and abundant food supply. It also enhances IT systems to decrease paperwork and increase efficiency for meat and poultry processors to expand market access domestically and through exports to foreign countries. FSIS will also track and identify the source of foodborne illness outbreaks from contaminants, including pathogens such as *Listeria* in deli meats.

FSIS cooperates with state agencies in developing and administering the Meat and Poultry Inspection and Cooperative Interstate Shipments programs. These programs benefit small and very small establishments, and FSIS aids in the sustainment and expansion of these programs.

1) Federal: A decrease of $24,000,000 for Federal Food Safety Inspection ($1,089,208,000 available in 2025).

    Federal: A decrease of $24,000,000 for operational cost-saving measures. FSIS anticipates savings from operational cost-saving measures and other efforts to reduce personnel on board. FSIS has taken action in 2025 to reduce the agencies staffing levels that will produce efficiencies in 2026 while also ensuring that FSIS is able to effectively perform its critical food safety mission.

2) State: An increase of $15,200,000 for the State FSIS Program ($67,641,000 available in 2025).

    State: An increase of $15,200,000 for reimbursement of state Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs. The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) and the Poultry Product Inspection Act (PPIA) provide for FSIS to cooperate with state agencies in developing and administering the State MPI and Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) programs. The programs are for small and very small establishments and aid in the sustainment and expansion of these establishments.

    We must ensure that inspection services are available for the growing number of establishments, either through FSIS or state programs. Since 2019, the State MPI reimbursement rate has fallen from 49.2 percent to 45.5 percent in 2024. The number of states participating has increased from 27 to 29 during that time and the number of establishments in all state inspection programs has increased from 1,833 to 2,032. The statutes provide for FSIS to contribute up to 50 percent of the cost of the State MPI programs (which the states consider their reimbursement standard) and no less than 60 percent for the CIS programs.

    State MPI program costs are steadily increasing due to increased costs, rising salaries and benefits for state inspectors, and expansion of individual state programs. Two new states established programs in 2023, and three others are considering establishing programs by 2026. Furthermore, the CIS Program continues to expand; the total number of states increased from four to ten from 2018 to 2024 and existing states are adding establishments to the program.

This funding increase is needed to prevent further reductions to the state MPI reimbursement rates. The last funding increase was in 2020 for $5 million. In 2025, appropriated funds for state MPI reimbursement is estimated to average 40 percent. Without additional funding FSIS anticipates the 2026 the average reimbursement rate will be 38 percent, which is extremely low when compared to the historical average reimbursement rate of 50 percent. Participating states are currently covering over 50 percent of the costs associated with the state inspection programs, leading to significant concerns expressed by several states. As the state MPI program reimbursement rates continue to decline states may drop out of the program or turn some of their establishments over to FSIS for inspection coverage. If that happens, FSIS will be required by law to provide federal inspectors for those establishments and pay the full cost of inspection. This would degrade the agency's ability to perform its food safety mission as FSIS does not have the personnel or funding to provide coverage for a 30 percent increase of additional state establishments (approximately 2,000). If all the states drop their inspection programs, FSIS costs could increase by a total of $100 million. Even if only a small number of states drop their inspection program or turn over inspection responsibility for establishments to FSIS, it could result in a significant increase in costs for the agency. Without a significant funding increase FSIS would not be able to meet the demand for the additional inspection coverage, directly impacting industry's productivity and the availability of a safe and abundant food supply for all Americans.

FSIS is requesting this substantial funding increase due to the continuous expansion of the program, with new states and establishments joining every year, increasing base costs and the lack of commensurate annual funding increases. If states pull out of the program, FSIS will need to absorb the entire cost of the program which would result in an even larger funding need for FSIS.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Program: Workplace Flexibility

Proposal: In 2026, FSIS will re-propose permanent changes to provide inspection personnel flexible work arrangements.

With this change, FSIS can provide flexible scheduling for inspectors rather than requiring them to work all hours and days of plant operations. This proposal would provide FSIS flexibility in scheduling inspectors for Overtime/Holiday shifts and allow the agency to better meet its food safety mission by increasing employee retention. This change will be cost neutral for industry because industry will still only be charged for the extra services they are receiving.

To bring about this change, the following U.S. Code citations need to be amended to read as the following:

21 USC 468

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of this chapter shall be borne by the United States, except for the costs of inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays, which shall be borne by the establishment, pursuant to section 2219a of title 7.

21 USC 695

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of laws relating to Federal inspection of meat and meat food products shall be borne by the United States, except for the cost of inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays, which shall be borne by the establishment, pursuant to section 2219a of title 7.

21 USC 1053(a)

The cost of inspection rendered under the requirements of this chapter, and other costs of administration of this chapter, shall be borne by the United States, except the cost of inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays, at such rates as the Secretary may determine shall be borne by such official plants. Sums received by the Secretary from official plants under this section shall be available without fiscal year limitation to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

7 USC 2219a

(a) In general

The Secretary of Agriculture may-

(1) at rates determined by the Secretary, subject to applicable law relating to minimum wages and maximum hours, pay employees of the Department of Agriculture providing inspection services in an establishment subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) or the Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) for inspection services provided outside of an establishment's approved inspection shift(s), and that provided on federal holidays; and
(2) collect from the establishment reimbursement for any such services provided.

(b) Availability

Sums received by the Secretary under this section shall remain available until expended without further appropriation and without fiscal year limitation, to carry out subsection (a).

There will be no offsets in 2026. No change in budget authority is anticipated.

Rationale: Current policy prevents FSIS from employing part-time employees or providing flexible schedules to employees while still collecting fees for overtime or holiday services provided as requested by the plant.

Goal: This proposal would provide FSIS flexibility in scheduling inspectors for Overtime/Holiday shifts.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS AND FTES

Table FSIS-9. Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs

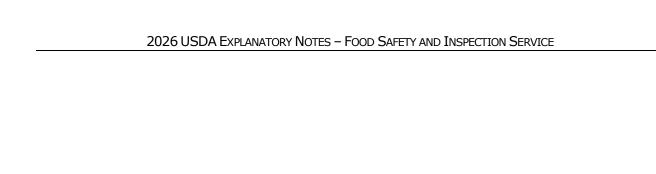| State/Territory/Country	2023 Actual	FTEs	2024 Actual	FTEs	2025 Estimated	FTEs	2026 Estimated	FTEs
Alabama	$33,682	295	$35,881	299	$37,013	292	$37,377	292
Alaska	946	8	986	8	1,017	8	1,028	8
American Samoa	6	-	6	-	6	-	6	-
Arizona	4,233	35	4,867	36	5,021	35	5,069	35
Arkansas	37,157	328	40,140	331	41,406	323	41,815	323
California	74,774	573	80,970	576	83,524	563	84,347	565
Colorado	30,750	226	31,992	226	33,001	220	33,327	220
Connecticut	1,691	14	1,842	15	1,900	14	1,918	13
Delaware	11,121	101	11,742	104	12,112	101	12,230	101
District of Columbia	156,536	475	103,056	454	106,361	447	78,026	322
Florida	13,717	139	15,471	141	15,959	137	16,116	137
Georgia	85,223	636	87,905	637	90,678	622	91,569	625
Guam	429	4	487	3	427	3	413	3
Hawaii	3,478	27	4,112	27	4,242	27	4,284	27
Idaho	5,542	49	6,832	50	7,048	49	7,117	49
Illinois	36,147	229	39,177	228	40,413	222	40,811	222
Indiana	15,630	130	16,337	129	16,852	126	17,019	127
Iowa	46,101	382	47,371	373	48,865	365	49,346	365
Kansas	21,212	203	23,086	201	23,814	197	24,048	198
Kentucky	15,867	146	16,891	143	17,424	139	17,595	139
Louisiana	11,116	84	12,218	84	12,603	82	12,728	82
Maine	1,882	12	2,233	12	2,303	11	2,326	11
Maryland	49,625	125	57,307	125	59,115	122	59,697	123
Massachusetts	2,994	27	3,288	27	3,392	27	3,425	27
Michigan	10,743	103	11,648	103	12,015	100	12,135	100
Minnesota	38,596	333	42,701	331	44,048	323	44,483	323
Mississippi	32,668	255	34,506	251	35,594	245	35,945	245
Missouri	36,675	294	39,110	288	40,344	281	40,743	281
Montana	4,160	26	4,880	26	5,034	26	5,083	26
N. Mariana Islands	137	1	127	2	37	1	36	1
Nebraska	31,706	284	33,648	289	34,709	282	35,051	282
Nevada	1,160	12	1,384	12	1,428	11	1,442	11
New Hampshire	986	9	1,036	10	1,069	10	1,079	10
New Jersey	12,775	116	13,713	115	14,146	113	14,286	113
New Mexico	1,826	16	2,053	16	2,118	15	2,139	14
New York	16,360	161	18,215	161	18,790	157	18,974	158
North Carolina	48,682	385	51,202	376	52,817	367	53,338	369
North Dakota	2,141	12	2,348	12	2,422	11	2,445	11
Ohio	19,952	126	21,725	126	22,410	123	22,631	124
Oklahoma	10,097	74	10,974	73	11,320	72	11,431	72
Oregon	5,721	53	6,254	53	6,451	52	6,514	53
Pennsylvania	37,747	308	39,506	299	40,752	292	41,153	293
Puerto Rico	4,537	49	4,851	46	4,850	44	4,706	44
Rhode Island	1,105	10	1,262	10	1,302	10	1,314	10
South Carolina	14,405	117	15,806	116	16,305	114	16,466	114
South Dakota	6,843	60	7,697	60	7,940	58	8,018	59
Tennessee	17,883	167	18,698	165	19,288	161	19,478	161
Texas	77,755	619	85,733	615	88,743	603	89,617	605
Utah	6,851	47	7,468	47	7,704	46	7,779	46
Vermont	2,896	13	3,308	13	3,412	12	3,446	12
Virgin Islands	131	1	127	1	124	1	120	1
Virginia	17,181	152	17,036	147	17,573	144	17,747	144
Washington	11,285	105	12,732	106	13,134	104	13,263	104
West Virginia	4,051	33	4,614	33	4,760	32	4,806	32
Wisconsin	22,741	162	24,454	160	25,225	156	25,474	156
Wyoming	1,326	10	1,510	10	1,558	10	1,573	10
China	454	2	521	1	353	1	278	1
Mexico	335	1	434	1	572	1	579	1
Obligations	1,161,770	8,364	1,185,478	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000
Lapsing Balances	115	-	120	-	-	-	-	-
Bal. Available, EOY	909	-	8,833	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Available	1,162,794	8,364	1,194,431	8,303	1,222,842	8,110	1,205,209	8,000

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Table FSIS-10. Geographic Breakdown of Supplemental Obligations and FTEs (thousands of dollars, FTEs)

State/Territory/Country	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Estimated	2026 Estimated
Alabama	$78	-	-	-
Alaska	2	-	-	-
Arizona	20	-	-	-
Arkansas	112	-	-	-
California	1,896	-	-	-
Colorado	147	-	-	-
Connecticut	68	-	-	-
Delaware	16	-	-	-
Florida	331	-	-	-
Georgia	385	-	-	-
Guam	11	-	-	-
Hawaii	65	-	-	-
Idaho	147	-	-	-
Illinois	760	-	-	-
Indiana	167	-	-	-
Iowa	423	-	-	-
Kansas	72	-	-	-
Kentucky	116	-	-	-
Louisiana	114	-	-	-
Maine	14	-	-	-
Maryland	183	-	-	-
Massachusetts	228	-	-	-
Michigan	195	-	-	-
Minnesota	157	-	-	-
Mississippi	98	-	-	-
Missouri	29,515	-	-	-
Montana	23	-	-	-
Nebraska	212	-	-	-
Nevada	96	-	-	-
New Hampshire	16	-	-	-
New Jersey	824	-	-	-
New Mexico	28	-	-	-
New York	1,125	-	-	-
North Carolina	173	-	-	-
North Dakota	19	-	-	-
Ohio	355	-	-	-
Oklahoma	134	-	-	-
Oregon	132	-	-	-
Pennsylvania	794	-	-	-
Puerto Rico	88	-	-	-
Rhode Island	17	-	-	-
South Carolina	88	-	-	-
South Dakota	29	-	-	-
Tennessee	129	-	-	-
Texas	1,233	-	-	-
Utah	103	-	-	-
Vermont	34	-	-	-
Virginia	75	-	-	-
Washington	397	-	-	-
West Virginia	27	-	-	-
Wisconsin	255	-	-	-
Wyoming	29	-	-	-
Obligations	41,755	-	-	-

CLASSIFICATION BY OBJECTS

Table FSIS-11. Classification by Objects (thousands of dollars)

Item No.	Item	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Estimated	2026 Estimated
	Personnel Compensation:				
	Washington D.C.	$85,832	$89,923	$91,006	$66,760
	Personnel Compensation, Field..........................	554,574	580,788	595,922	604,168
11	Total personnel compensation	640,406	670,711	686,928	670,928
12	Personal benefits	286,162	300,530	308,483	300,483
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	293	472	773	773
	Total, personnel comp. and benefits	926,861	971,713	996,184	972,184
	Other Objects:				
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	34,067	32,695	32,690	32,690
22.0	Transportation of things....................................	3,771	3,958	3,958	3,958
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	5,271	4,464	7,463	9,760
23.2	Rental payments to others	-	-	-	-
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges........	11,176	2,154	2,154	2,154
24.0	Printing and reproduction..................................	423	395	393	393
25	Other contractual services................................	-	-	-	-
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	2,503	2	2	2
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	24,132	29,362	29,502	27,205
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources.....	69,880	61,272	74,036	65,203
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	1,081	21	21	21
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	658	548	548	548
26.0	Supplies and materials	10,097	10,771	10,769	10,769
31.0	Equipment...	9,723	3,142	3,141	3,141
32.0	Land and structures	-	246	246	246
33.0	Investments and loans	-	-	-	-
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions...................	61,952	64,576	61,576	76,776
42.0	Insurance Claims and Indemnities	154	157	157	157
43.0	Interest and Dividends	21	2	2	2
	Total, Other Objects.......................................	234,909	213,765	226,658	233,025
99.9	Total, new obligations	1,161,770	1,185,478	1,222,842	1,205,209
	DHS Building Security Payments (included in 25.3)	$962	$1,008	$1,080	$1,080
	Information Technology Investments:				
	Major Investment PHIS				
25.2	External Labor (Contractors)	7,041	5,565	7,009	7,408
25.3	Software	3	3	3	3
	Total Major Investment PHIS	7,044	5,568	7,012	7,411
	Major Investment CBAS				
11	Internal Labor	3,281	3,281	3,281	3,363
25.2	External Labor (Contractors)	13,922	9,188	9,638	10,025
25.3	Software	-	955	516	535
	Total Major Investment CBAS	17,203	13,424	13,435	13,923
	Total Major Investments	24,247	18,992	20,447	21,334
	Mission Area Non-Major Investment Totals	6,755	5,302	4,386	4,580
	Mission Area Standard Investment Totals	40,213	18,663	23,751	24,295
25.3	Mission Area WCF Transfers	57,012	77,421	79,743	82,136
	Total Non-Major Investment	103,980	101,386	107,880	111,011
	Total IT Investments.....................................	128,227	120,378	128,327	132,345
	Cybersecurity				
	Human Capital	3	0	0	-
	Sector Risk Management...................................	9	-	-	-
	Identify...	-	2	2	2
	Protect	-	7	8	8
	Total Cybersecurity..	12	9	10	10
	Position Data:				
	Average Salary (dollars), ES Position	$240,138	$251,717	$258,010	$258,010
	Average Salary (dollars), GS Position	$79,143	$82,959	$85,033	$85,033
	Average Grade, GS Position..............................	9.3	9.4	9.4	9.3

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<u>STATUS OF PROGRAMS</u>

As USDA's public health regulatory agency, FSIS is responsible for ensuring that domestic and imported meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled. Consistent with its role, FSIS' mission is to protect public health by preventing illness from these products. This mission guides agency actions to implement and enforce the Acts from which it gets its regulatory authority—the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA), and the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA)—to incorporate data and science into decision making, and continually improve operations to ensure the Agency functions efficiently and effectively. FSIS also ensures the safety and integrity of FSIS-regulated food products imported from eligible countries and U.S. products exported to all countries that accept U.S. product around the globe.

Thousands of FSIS inspection personnel across the Nation conduct daily inspection activities to verify industry compliance with applicable food safety regulatory requirements. FSIS employees' work across all program areas is critical for achieving Agency goals to prevent foodborne illness and protect public health; transform inspection strategies, policies, and scientific approaches to improve public health; and achieve operational excellence.

Our Presence (Fiscal Year 2024)

8,500
FSIS EMPLOYEES

7,500
FRONT LINE WORKFORCE
Frontline employees are inspection personnel, lab employees, and investigators.

7,100
FEDERALLY REGULATED ESTABLISHMENTS
Over 91% of the slaughter and processing establishments regulated by FSIS are considered small or very small.

FSIS' Status of Programs highlights accomplishments that fall within its four funding categories—Federal programs, State programs, international programs, and digital infrastructure for public health communications and information systems—and closes with cross-cutting examples of progress.

1. Federal Food Safety and Inspection Program

Science and data inform all Agency decisions—its day-to-day inspection tasks, the design of FSIS' sampling programs, FSIS' laboratory methods, and the policies and regulations it implements—to ensure its actions are meaningful to food safety and protect public health. Thousands of FSIS employees across the United States work every day to achieve this goal by carrying out tasks to verify that imported and domestically produced products comply with applicable U.S. food safety regulatory requirements.

During 2024, FSIS protected public health by conducting ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of 163 million head of livestock and 9.8 billion poultry carcasses. Additionally, FSIS inspected 2.8 billion pounds of liquid, frozen, and dried egg products and conducted 7.7 million food safety procedures to

verify that systems at all federally inspected facilities continued to maintain food safety and wholesomeness requirements.

Our Inspection by the Numbers (Fiscal Year 2024)

163 MILLION
HEAD OF LIVESTOCK INSPECTED

9.8 BILLION
POULTRY CARCASSES INSPECTED

2.8 BILLION
POUNDS OF LIQUID, FROZEN AND DRIED EGG PRODUCTS INSPECTED

7.7 MILLION
FOOD SAFETY PROCEDURES

FSIS strives to adopt innovative approaches to inspection to verify that regulated establishments meet the Agency's requirements and produce safe and properly labeled products. FSIS continually updates its regulations, policies, guidance to industry, and instructions to field personnel to ensure they reflect the latest scientific advancements. Focusing on hazard control during food production provides FSIS with information on how to continually evolve policies impacting industry controls and FSIS verification. Since implementing HACCP in 1996, industry has progressed significantly in hazard control, with particular emphasis on microbiological hazards.

1.2 Monitoring Avian Influenza in Dairy Cows

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 was first detected in dairy cows in March 2024. In April 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed one human H5N1 infection in a person with exposure to dairy cows. In order to ensure the safety of the food supply in light of this outbreak in cows, FSIS initially conducted the following three beef safety studies in conjunction with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and ARS:

1. Collecting and screening ground beef samples for H5N1 using polymerase chain reaction (PCR);
2. Collecting and screening tissue samples from culled dairy cows that FSIS personnel condemned at post-mortem inspection for H5N1; and
3. Cooking inoculated ground beef patties to determine whether the virus would be inactivated by cooking.

All ground beef samples were negative for the virus. In the testing of samples from condemned animals (deemed unfit by FSIS to enter commerce), 108 of 109 animals tested did not show any virus. The cooking study demonstrated that cooking the patties to FSIS- recommended temperatures is effective in inactivating even a high level of virus.

While FSIS remains confident that the meat supply is safe, in September 2024, FSIS implemented an additional H5N1 Influenza A monitoring program for dairy cows at slaughter to provide further assurances. FSIS leveraged samples it collects as part of its National Residue Program to test for H5N1 virus in muscle samples from healthy dairy cows using a polymerase chain reaction, or "PCR," technique. In the event of a positive H5N1 finding, USDA would work with industry to ensure the

carcass does not enter the food supply. In the last 2 weeks of 2024, FSIS had results from samples from 11 cows; no H5N1 was detected in those samples.

1.3 Optimization of Inspection Systems

FSIS continuously evaluates opportunities to optimize its inspection systems to ensure they are meaningful to public health protection, effectively utilize agency resources, are workable for regulated establishments, and are supported by science-based approaches to food safety.

In 2014, FSIS amended the regulations to establish the New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS) for young chicken and all turkey slaughter establishments. Five years later, in 2019, FSIS amended the regulations to establish the New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS) for market hog slaughter establishments. In response to litigation in 2021 and after consulting with the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), FSIS granted line speed waivers to NSIS establishments in 2022 and to NPIS establishments in 2023, provided they submit worker safety and food safety data to FSIS. In 2022 FSIS also contracted with a third-party team of worker safety experts to evaluate the impact of increased line speeds on worker safety and inform the Agency's next steps.

In 2025, the study team concluded there was no direct link between processing speeds and workplace injuries in swine and poultry slaughter establishments. As a result, FSIS extended waivers for NSIS and NPIS establishments that participated in the worker safety studies and moved towards rulemaking to formalize line speed increases for NPIS and NSIS establishments.

1.4 Public Health Information System

The Public Health Information System (PHIS) is a dynamic, comprehensive web-based system used to collect, consolidate, and analyze data pertaining to FSIS-regulated products. It is used by industry to conduct daily activities, such as viewing data, viewing reports, submitting export applications, appealing noncompliance records, and reporting adulterated product, among many other capabilities. For more than a decade, PHIS has integrated FSIS data sources to support a comprehensive, timely, and reliable data-driven approach to FSIS inspection. PHIS data shows how well establishments maintain process control and reveals aspects of food safety systems that may require more attention. These data are readily available to FSIS field personnel conducting inspections, public health risk evaluations, and food safety assessments, as well as other FSIS employees who support these activities. Through improved data quality, reporting, management controls, and use, PHIS has enabled FSIS to communicate more effectively internally and with industry.

FSIS continues to expand data products available in PHIS reports. One key PHIS enhancement from 2024 included the availability of comprehensive data results for products sampled by FSIS at an establishment within the past 12 months. This enhancement enabled FSIS to discontinue issuing quarterly establishment information letters to meat and poultry establishments. The update went into effect in July 2024 in addition to guidance on FSIS' website detailing how establishments can access the data and steps for creating a PHIS account.

1.5 Labs and Sampling

FSIS laboratories operate 365 days a year, analyzing hundreds of product samples each day to identify potential hazards and threats to the food supply. In 2024, FSIS analyzed more than 97,000 samples submitted by inspectors and generated approximately 2.2 million individual test results on these samples. FSIS also collected and analyzed approximately 500 retail ground beef samples for Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC). Using whole genome sequencing (WGS) and other characterization techniques, FSIS conducted microbiological characterization of more than 12,000 bacterial isolates, reporting more than 454,000 separate test results.

Fiscal Year 2024 Sampling Numbers

97,000 Samples

The FSIS Field Service Laboratories analyzed over 97,000 samples

12,000 Isolates

Creating over 12,000 bacterial isolates

454,000 Tests

These samples were used to perform upwards of 454,000 tests

2.2 M Results

More than 2,280,000 results were reported

FSIS regularly evaluates its sampling programs to ensure they are meaningful to public health protection, will provide the best available science and data to inform agency decisions, effectively utilize agency resources, and contribute to optimal workflow efficiencies. In 2024, after thorough evaluation of public contract opportunities, FSIS implemented four updated approaches to rapid pathogen detection for *Campylobacter*, *Lm*, *Salmonella*, and STEC. The Agency also updated four methods to analyze FSIS-regulated products for several different chemical residues, including certain pesticides and animal drug residues.

In September 2024, FSIS broadened the scope of its allergen verification sampling program at establishments that produce RTE products with labeling that claims the absence of at least one of the 14 food allergens including soy, crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp), eggs, peanuts, milk, and nine tree nuts (e.g., almond, Brazil nut, cashew, coconut, hazelnut, macadamia, pine nut, pistachio, and walnut), in addition to gluten, which can cause severe reactions in people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity. The program aims to ensure the accuracy of labeling claims for allergens in RTE products, ultimately enhancing consumer safety. FSIS intends to continue to develop the sampling program to include analysis for sesame.

The National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) is a national public health surveillance system that supports a one-health focused environmental surveillance of potential sources of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Through NARMS, USDA, in partnership with State and local public health departments, CDC, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), tracks changes in antimicrobial susceptibility of select foodborne enteric bacteria found in ill people, retail meats, and food animals. This year, FSIS collected and analyzed more than 5,000 intestinal and approximately 41,000 meat and poultry samples as part of this partnership. Samples were tested for *Salmonella*, Campylobacter, and indicator bacteria (for intestinal samples only); all microorganisms detected were characterized to determine their AMR.

1.6 Foodborne Illness, Investigations, and Recalls

FSIS continuously monitors foodborne illnesses through coordination and data sharing among its partners. In addition to using sampling results at the individual establishment level, the Agency monitors sampling results at a national level for indications of food safety hazards associated with FSIS-regulated products. The Agency's focus is not only on preventing contamination in establishments, but also on quickly investigating illnesses potentially associated with FSIS-regulated

products. FSIS relies on its collaboration with public health partners, Federal, State, and local governments, as well as with industry, to identify the contaminated product. If a source of an outbreak or contamination event is identified, FSIS promptly requests a recall of adulterated product from commerce, and the Agency issues communications to alert consumers.

FSIS uses its consumer complaint monitoring system (CCMS), media reports, CDC PulseNet, and other data sources to conduct surveillance and investigate potential foodborne hazards associated with FSIS-regulated products. In 2024, FSIS received and evaluated 1,487 consumer complaints, 220 of which required additional investigations. Seventy-six of the investigations resulted in actions: 65 voluntary actions (i.e., establishment re-training employees or updating HACCP plans), 4 enforcement actions, and 7 incidences of product control (i.e., recalls, detention, or seizure of product). In 2024, consumer complaints reported through CCMS led to two Class I recalls (reasonable probability that eating the food will cause serious adverse health consequences or death). There were 16 complaints reported after product recalls. These complaints were evaluated to determine if they fell under the scope of the recall or if an expansion may be warranted.

FSIS monitored 40 illness clusters potentially associated with FSIS-regulated products this fiscal year. The Agency coordinated with CDC and other public health partners to investigate 3 foodborne illness outbreaks possibly associated with FSIS-regulated products, representing 193 illnesses and 101 hospitalizations. Of the three investigations, two were investigations for *Salmonella* and one for *Lm*. Two of the three outbreak investigations led to FSIS public communications because the investigations yielded specific or actionable information to share with the public through three recalls, including a recall expansion, and one public health alert (PHA).

In July 2024, FSIS opened an investigation into a multistate *Lm* outbreak linked to RTE meat and poultry products. By the end of 2024, 59 people from 19 states were infected with the outbreak strain of *Lm*, including 59 hospitalizations and ten deaths. The Agency is taking this public health matter very seriously and FSIS' investigation includes a top-to-bottom review to determine contributing factors that led to the outbreak, what needs to be improved, and, with a particular focus on FSIS' inspection oversight, and where changes are needed to prevent gaps. FSIS completed its review and shared findings in 2025.

There were 46 recalls in 2024: 8 beef, 13 poultry, 13 pork, and 12 involving multiple species. More than eight million pounds of meat and poultry products were recalled. Out of the 46 total recalls, 43 were Class I (reasonable probability that eating the food will cause serious adverse health consequences or death) and 3 were Class II (remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food). There were no Class III recalls (use of the product will not cause adverse health consequences). Seven recalls were due to extraneous material contamination; 5 were related to import violations; 13 were due to undeclared allergens in the product; 6 involved products produced without required inspection; 12 for possible microbiological contamination, specifically 8 for *Lm*, 3 for STEC, and 1 for *Salmonella*; 2 were in response to processing deviations; and 1 for product contamination due to non-food grade mineral seal oil. FSIS also issued 20 PHAs in 2024, 40 percent of which were attributed to undeclared allergens. PHAs are typically issued in lieu of a recall in situations when the product is no longer available to consumers in commerce but may still present a risk to human health (i.e., the implicated product may be in consumers' pantries, refrigerators, or freezers).

In December 2023, the Agency updated FSIS Directive 8080.1: Managing Adulterated or Misbranded Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products, which provides the terminology, responsibilities, and public notification procedures regarding the assessment of adulterated and misbranded meat, poultry, and egg products that may have entered commerce, and the voluntary recall of such products. FSIS revised this directive in its entirety to include egg products as an FSIS-regulated commodity subject to voluntary recall and to provide instruction regarding large volume recalls and recalls of ingredients regulated by FDA. It also includes new definitions for Class III recalls; clarifies when FSIS may publish PHAs; and makes additional clarifying revisions throughout.

1.7 In-Commerce Activities

FSIS conducts extensive investigations, compliance activities, and outreach at in-commerce facilities, such as warehouses, distributors, food transporters, and retail stores and delicatessens. If these activities identify adulterated or misbranded meat, poultry, or egg products, the Agency removes these products from in-commerce facilities and takes appropriate regulatory action to deter future violations.

FSIS conducted more than 13,000 surveillance activities in 2024. The Agency detained more than 5.7 million pounds of noncompliant meat, poultry, and egg products in commerce. FSIS also conducted over 1,300 investigations in response to alleged violations of the FMIA, PPIA, or EPIA, 93 percent of which were based on food safety violations. FSIS' investigative findings and evidence supported enforcement actions. FSIS continued to verify retail compliance with beef grinding recordkeeping requirements and expand its outreach and education to improve compliance, conducting more than 1,300 beef grinding record verifications.

In September 2024, FSIS released a new guidance document for retailers. FSIS does not currently sample beef that is intended for intact use (such as for a steak or roast not intended for grinding or mechanical tenderizing) to test for STEC. However, some retailers use beef intended for intact use (e.g., primals, steaks, roasts) to produce ground beef, which poses a food safety risk. Grinding trim from products intended for intact use increases the risk that consumers could get sick. Through its outreach to retailers, FSIS is using this document to educate and encourage retailers to consider intended use when grinding beef at retail and maintain ongoing communication with their supplier to ensure critical food safety risks are controlled.

2. State Food Safety and Inspection Programs

State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs are an integral part of the Nation's food safety system. States may operate their own MPI programs under a cooperative agreement with FSIS through which they must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the FMIA, PPIA, and HMSA. In 2024, FSIS continued to fund State MPI programs to maintain State inspection. The MPI program supported more than 1,450 State-inspected establishments and more than 2,200 custom-exempt facilities across the 29 State MPI programs currently operating. FSIS has MPI agreements with Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Product produced under State MPI programs is limited to intrastate commerce unless a State opts into an additional program, the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program. The CIS program promotes the expansion of business opportunities for State-inspected meat and poultry establishments. Under CIS, State-inspected plants must meet the same requirements as federally inspected facilities and can ship their product in interstate commerce. In 2024, there were 10 States participating in the CIS program. FSIS has CIS agreements with Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wisconsin. While the number of participating establishments fluctuates, there were a total of 129 establishments participating in CIS programs by the end of 2024.

FSIS conducted annual reviews of all 29 State MPI programs and their requirements—including enforcement of those requirements—with respect to slaughter, preparation, processing, storage, handling, and distribution of livestock carcasses and parts, meat and meat food products, and poultry products. FSIS also conducted onsite verification audits for 11 State MPI programs: Arkansas, Delaware, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. FSIS continued to ensure State MPI programs complied with civil rights laws and agency policies and practices through their annual self-assessments.

The Federal State Cooperative Act (Talmadge-Aiken) (7 U.S.C. 450) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative arrangements with State departments of agriculture and other State agencies to assist the Secretary in the administration and enforcement of relevant Federal laws and regulations to the extent and in the manner appropriate to the public interest. When it benefits FSIS, the Agency may enter into a separate TA cooperative agreement with a State for the State MPI program to perform inspection or other regulatory activities on behalf of the Agency. Under TA, State employees verify Federal laws and regulations on behalf of FSIS. TA inspection personnel receive the same training as FSIS inspection personnel and enforce Federal laws, regulations, and policies. FSIS is responsible for identifying establishments, approving State personnel to provide inspection at those establishments, monitoring inspection performed and providing reimbursement to the State for these activities. FSIS also retains jurisdiction and the responsibility to perform inspections if States do not perform them. By the end of 2024, FSIS had TA cooperative agreements with nine State meat and poultry inspection programs: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Virginia and TA cross utilization agreements with three additional States: Louisiana, South Carolina, and Vermont.

PHIS is also available to State users, providing data needed to manage their respective programs. FSIS continues to work with State programs to help ensure PHIS access for States electing to use non-Federal information technology (IT) equipment. This flexibility helps States find the most cost-effective ways to manage their IT needs and improve data collection and management from non-PHIS users. FSIS' ongoing investment in information technology initiatives, such as sharing data warehousing capabilities with State partners, continues to strengthen the quality of communication and information distributed across Federal and State public health regulatory agencies.

3. International Food Safety and Inspection Program

FSIS ensures that all food available to Americans, whether sourced domestically or from foreign countries, is safe. The Agency ensures the safety of all regulated products eligible to be imported from 39 countries, and those exported by FSIS-regulated establishments to all countries that accept U.S. product around the globe.

FSIS reinspects all imported products to ensure they are properly labeled and produced under equivalent inspection in countries and establishments eligible to export to the U.S. During 2024, importers presented more than 5.6 billion pounds of meat and poultry products to FSIS for reinspection and approximately 5.4 million pounds of egg products. The tables below provide the 2024 import statistics for meat, poultry, and egg products:

Table FSIS-12. Imported Meat and Poultry Product

2024	Total Product Presented for Routine Reinspection (Pounds) [1]	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) [2]	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds)	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) [3]	Total Accepted (Pounds) [4]
TOTAL [5]	5,641,794,696	409,160,557	49,436,784	41,836,661	5,634,194,573

Table FSIS-13. Imported Egg Product

2024	Total Product Presented for Routine Reinspection (Pounds) [1]	Product Subjected to Additional TOIs (Pounds) [2]	Total Product Refused Entry (Pounds)	Refused Product Rectified (Pounds) [3]	Total Accepted (Pounds) [4]
TOTAL	5,389,724	959,159	84,548	84,418	5,389,594

Abbreviation: TOI, Type of Inspection.

[1] Routine reinspection includes the Certification and Label Verification TOIs, as well as verification of product condition and identification of shipping damage.

[2] This column is a subset of the total product presented and identifies the amount of product subjected to more in depth physical or laboratory TOIs, in addition to the routine reinspection TOIs (Certification and Label Verification).

[3] Refused Product Rectified is the pounds of product that were initially refused entry but were subsequently brought into compliance and accepted. Issues amenable to rectification include labeling and certification.

[4] Total Accepted includes all products that were initially inspected and passed plus product that was initially refused entry but later rectified.

[5] Data include Siluriformes fish.

FSIS has processes in place to conduct regular equivalence reviews and audits of foreign countries' food safety inspection systems and conducts point-of-entry reinspection of all shipments of FSIS-regulated product prior to entering U.S. commerce. Determining the equivalence of a country's food safety inspection system is a prerequisite to importing products into the U.S. The process evaluates whether a foreign country's food safety inspection system achieves an equivalent level of public health protection as applied domestically in the U.S. In 2024, FSIS provided equivalence-related feedback to 39 eligible countries, 17 countries seeking initial equivalence, 4 countries seeking reinstatement of equivalence, and 7 countries seeking expansions of their equivalence determinations.

Each year, FSIS completes verification audits to ensure compliance with equivalence requirements of the FMIA, PPIA, EPIA, and HMSA. IN 2024, FSIS completed equivalence verification audits in the following 13 countries: Austria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Republic of Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and Uruguay.

On its website, FSIS regularly updates the import library and status chart for equivalence requests to reflect changes in foreign countries' equivalence status. Updates are made to these tools when a country is determined as equivalent or seeks an initial, reinstatement, or expansion of equivalence determinations. These tools provide real-time updates to stakeholders on the status of a foreign country's eligibility and equivalence status with FSIS. The Agency also regularly updates the export library, reviewing and approving approximately 11,600 export library updates in 2024. FSIS also reviewed more than 780 applications from federally inspected establishments that want to export product to foreign countries and require official FSIS certification for eligibility. There are 12 countries/economies that require FSIS to certify establishments for export. These countries are Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union (27 countries), Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

In 2024, FSIS coordinated more than 1,200 export and import calls from industry to assist with shipments for export and to address import returns or re-exports to a different importing country. When U.S. meat, poultry, or egg product exports are denied entry to another country or rejected by overseas customers and returned, FSIS works with the foreign governments to provide technical food safety or certification information and provides assistance to industry with the additional official information required for the product to be allowed entry or re-export.

FSIS also extensively reviews requests for product return to identify possible food defense and food safety concerns. As necessary, FSIS coordinates reinspection of shipments to ensure returning products are safe before entering U.S. commerce. In 2024, FSIS reviewed applications to return approximately 372 shipments of exported meat, poultry, and egg products weighing approximately 14.1 million pounds. FSIS coordinates with industry and foreign governments to resolve issues, such as export and import certification errors with FSIS-regulated products in foreign commerce and certify FSIS-inspected products held at foreign ports are safe and properly labeled and packaged. In 2024, FSIS resolved issues with shipments of U.S. meat and poultry products intended for entry to numerous countries and economies, including: Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, the European Union (27 countries), Honduras, Hong Kong, Indonesia Japan, Kuwait, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, the Philippines, Taiwan, Turkey, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam saving millions of dollars of rejected U.S. safe food products.

Throughout 2024, FSIS held bilateral technical meetings with 35 countries and economies, including Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, and the United Kingdom and held technical engagements with the European Union, to assist the U.S. government in removing barriers to U.S. product in foreign commerce and resolving questions related to the import and export of FSIS-regulated products, and ensuring the safety of products entering the U.S.

In addition, FSIS also works with countries to develop letterhead certificates that accompany exported products. Letterhead certificates are created whenever a country has implemented certain requirements that go beyond those that are specified in FSIS' Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness (9060-5) and FSIS' Egg Products Certificate of Wholesomeness (9060-5EP). The negotiations of letterhead certificates ensure that the countries' additional requirements for exported products are available to the FSIS certifying official to prevent U.S. exports from being rejected by the importing country. In 2024, FSIS negotiated and updated letterhead certificates for 10 countries and economies: Chile, Colombia, the European Union, Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Pakistan, Paraguay, and Peru.

FSIS offers global leadership in food safety, highlighting the strength of the U.S. meat, poultry, and egg products food safety regulatory system among foreign governments through bilateral engagements and support of foreign government audits. FSIS coordinated six onsite audits conducted by foreign governments, including Canada (pork and poultry), Indonesia (beef), Korea (beef), Taiwan (beef and poultry) to verify that FSIS' inspection system meets those countries' requirements. FSIS also assisted with onsite foreign country establishment visits from South Africa and Australia and responded to 23 foreign country questionnaires from 17 countries and economies, including Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Colombia, the European Union (27 countries), French Polynesia, Guyana, Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. By facilitating foreign audits of the U.S. food safety system, FSIS provides foreign food safety government agencies with the assurances of the U.S. food safety system that provides for and produces safe food products for consumers worldwide.

FSIS receives many requests from foreign governments and organizations to learn more about the United States' inspection system, including regulatory oversight, enforcement, verification, equivalence, and sampling approaches. FSIS conducts proactive outreach to enhance understanding of FSIS food safety policies, strategies, and import criteria. The Agency also conducts outreach to facilitate FSIS compliance with foreign countries' import conditions and other international obligations. In 2024, FSIS hosted or participated in 216 engagements on U.S. exports, foreign country equivalence requirements, and international coordination, including hosting a week-long virtual seminar on U.S. FSIS food safety regulatory requirements for 53 foreign government officials from 21 countries; hosted a week-long in-person seminar training and instruction in Spanish in Santiago, Chile on the U.S. food safety system for 50 foreign government officials from six South American countries; performed three FSIS educational outreach seminars in China for local in-country representatives and Chinese government officials and port authorities; co-hosted a workshop on electronic certification

under the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's Food Safety Cooperation Forum, in Lima, Peru, with approximately 50 foreign officials participating from 10 economies in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region; and held virtual training seminars for foreign officials in Algeria, Argentina, Guyana, and Namibia.

In 2024, FSIS provided guidance and assistance to more than 700 inquiries pertaining to import and export certification to reduce delays and ensure foreign requirements are understood for certification. These outreach activities and technical consultations play an important role in enhancing global knowledge of the U.S. food safety system and our science and risk-based approach to food safety thus increasing confidence in the safety of U.S. exports, and enhances the safety of imported products, facilitating the equivalence process.

FSIS works to ensure U.S. food safety and scientific risk-based perspectives are reflected in international food safety forums. FSIS participated in international food safety organizations such as Codex Alimentarius, the World Trade Organization, and the APEC forum. FSIS continued to participate as a delegate or alternate delegate on six Codex Alimentarius committees—food hygiene, food import and export certification and inspection systems, contaminants in food, food labeling, pesticide residues, and residues of veterinary drugs in foods. FSIS continued to chair the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, leading discussions between 51 member countries, 1 member organization, and 11 observer organizations to adopt revised guidelines for the management of microbiological foodborne pathogens. FSIS also supported the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) in the development of international trade agreements to ensure consistency with agency regulations and practices. FSIS also provides USTR technical food safety guidance and assistance for ongoing, nonbinding agreement work (specifically, Trade and Investment Framework Agreements) with foreign governments on issues pertaining to U.S. polices and processes for food safety. In 2024, FSIS provided technical assistance to USTR with bilateral trade negotiations with Armenia, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Pakistan, and Taiwan.

3.1 PHIS Import and Export Modules

PHIS houses essential import and export information and resources for foreign and domestic industry users. It also incorporates key information for FSIS inspectors that impact export certification and import reinspection duties.

FSIS maintains updates in the PHIS import module for the 39 countries deemed equivalent and the 12 countries seeking equivalence that are currently listed in PHIS for purposes of data integrity for equivalence related submissions and evaluations. For countries eligible to import into the U.S., in 2024, FSIS made 612 updates in PHIS for purposes of adding new eligible certified foreign establishments or delisting those foreign establishments no longer eligible, changes to eligible products or process categories, and review and comparison of a foreign country's annual certification with PHIS to ensure alignment. FSIS continued to electronically exchange data on import applications with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. In 2024, FSIS expanded the PHIS export module to 21 additional countries and territories: Barbados; Belize; Costa Rica; El Salvador; Tunisia; Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cabo Verde, Eswatini, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Nauru, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, for a total of 149 countries and territories within the PHIS export module to generate digitally signed export certificates. FSIS also successfully negotiated and implemented China's acceptance of digitally signed export certificates, eliminating burdensome manual, paper-based processes and country-specific certificates, as well as streamlining outdated and redundant data elements. FSIS issued more than 206,400 electronic export certificates in PHIS this year. The Agency also continued to prepare for Mexico's onboarding into the PHIS export component by coordinating closely with Mexico, communicating extensively with industry, and preparing FSIS internally. As of early 2025, all export certificates for products exported to Mexico are being generated, issued, and officially maintained in PHIS.

In addition to increasing document security, these digitization efforts have expedited export certificate turnaround times and augmented the Agency's ability to track exports, identify trends, and facilitate

recalls when needed. These achievements serve as a gateway towards an electronic certification (E-certification, or "eCert") process that would enable FSIS to directly transfer data among many agency trading partners. To further facilitate eCert, FSIS advanced technical engagement with Chile to receive import eCert in 2025 and initiated multiple technical engagements with Korea to advance progress on both export and import eCert exchange.

4. Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure System

Protecting public health requires the ability to make decisions based on real-time data during food safety emergencies. Through the public health data communication infrastructure system, FSIS can access agency data as well as data from partner agencies, nationally and internationally, through web-based tools. During the years, FSIS has continued to update its system to streamline data collection, conduct daily reporting tasks, manage resources, and provide robust, secure, adaptable, and on-demand IT services. Data generated from FSIS inspection actions and infrastructure support activities allow managers and administrators to make informed decisions efficiently and effectively.

The Agency leverages advanced commercial network technologies and data services to provide connectivity to agency personnel. Migrating FSIS' key applications and services to secure cloud systems keeps the Agency forward facing on the cutting edge of technology and enables FSIS to deploy applications more efficiently and expediently. Since 2020, FSIS has migrated several mission-critical applications to cloud systems, including PHIS, LIMS, FIMS, and the FSIS public website. During 2024, FSIS continued to improve the security, dependability, integrity, and availability of its cloud infrastructure. These applications maintain near constant uptime to ensure operational efficiency. With 90 percent of FSIS applications in the cloud, the Agency is closing in on its goal to transition its entire suite of applications from on premise locations to the cloud.

FSIS' enterprise architecture (EA) serves as a blueprint to simplify IT processes and describe how they work together to effectively accomplish the Agency's mission and goals. Cost effective, performance architecture is a key EA driver. This year, FSIS continued supporting and enhancing its technical reference model for technology architecture and integration as well as its EA portal that serves the Agency as a centralized hub for key architecture documents, business processes, and critical IT resources. FSIS began planning its follow-up to its 2023 Application Portfolio Rationalization findings, specifically addressing data management to improve system interoperability between its mission critical systems and for enabling artificial intelligence consistent with EO 13960 and EO 13859. In 2024, EA continued as a strategic tool for organizational alignment and decision-making precision. These new and continued developments mark a pivotal achievement in the Agency's pursuit of a robust infrastructure that can accommodate future advances and weather unforeseen challenges.

5. Cross-Cutting Accomplishments

In addition to the accomplishments that fall within FSIS' four funding categories, there were three areas of accomplishment that span multiple categories and agency programs. These cross-cutting accomplishments include data, collaboration with other agencies and public health partners, and consumer education.

5.1 Data

FSIS uses data at every level of agency functioning to inform decisions, regulations, policies, outreach, and education materials. Prioritizing transparency and data sharing, FSIS has over 50 datasets that are publicly available on its website. Of these, 18 are updated on an annual basis, and the other 32 are updated at minimum on a quarterly basis, including sampling reports, inspection task data (e.g., humane handling), and import data. Effective and efficient information flow is essential to stakeholder understanding and confidence in agency actions and decisions.

In 2024, FSIS reduced the cost and complexity of its data and analytics tool ecosystem by sunsetting the end-to-end data analytics platform, which is an expected cost savings of approximately $2 million

per annum. In support of this effort, FSIS converted 64 PHIS alerts, 104 PHIS reports, 25 sampling algorithms, and 56 automations to utilize an open-source platform.

In March 2024, FSIS enhanced the Meat, Poultry and Egg Product Inspection (MPI) Directory and the Establishment Demographic Data (MPI Supplement) files by providing additional establishment demographic details and more granularity to the interface filter and search capabilities. Beyond adding additional establishment demographic variables, FSIS incorporated geolocation information that uniquely identify geographic areas in addition to the latitude and longitude of an establishment. FSIS also expanded the number of slaughter subclasses reported. Animals like buffalo, bison, and elk, for example, which were previously classified as "Other Meat," can now be viewed independently. Similarly, FSIS added ratite slaughter information, including each subclass as appropriate. Users can also filter for inspection and activity type, including cell-cultured activities such as "Harvest," and processing exemptions, such as "Custom Slaughter," Retail," or "Religious." The MPI Supplement files, which had previously specified if an establishment processed "Ready-To-Eat (RTE)," "Not Ready-To-Eat (NRTE)," "Raw Intact," or "Raw Non-Intact" products now specify the species processed (i.e., "Ready-To-Eat Chicken" products or "Raw Intact Beef" products). These updates allow users to easily filter establishments by more specific slaughter and processing activities on the MPI Directory Dashboard.

In September 2024, FSIS replaced the Import Refusals and Import Volume dataset with two new datasets: Import Presented Refused and Import Refusal Reason. The update facilitates easier comparison between the proportions of weight presented and weight refused. The previous Import Refusals dataset was published at the lot-level, whereas the Import Volume dataset was published at the country, species, process category, product category, and product group levels. The new dataset, Import Presented Refused, includes both lot-level information for import volume and lot-level information for import refusals. The new Import Refusal Reason dataset is available as a complementary dataset, providing each refusal reason as its own row to facilitate analysis.

5.2 Collaboration with Other Agencies and Public Health Partners

FSIS collaborates with a multitude of partners to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of food safety outcomes. These include Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies and the collaboration via working groups allows the Agency to improve prevention and response to foodborne illness. Each year, FSIS builds on successes from existing partnerships and initiates new relationships with food safety regulators and organizations to meet its public health goals.

5.2.1 FDA and CDC

FSIS collaborates closely with FDA and CDC on numerous cross-disciplinary topics. Collaboration takes place through outreach to retailers regarding pathogen controls and technologies that help to identify outbreak sources (e.g., grinding logs, shopper cards, smart labels, etc.), cross-promotion of consumer food safety information through the FoodSafety.gov website and social media, and participation in specialized collaboration groups.

The leading areas of collaboration between the three agencies are foodborne outbreak surveillance, management, and response. As described in section 1.5, the three agencies collaborate through NARMS to track changes in antimicrobial susceptibility of select foodborne enteric bacteria found in ill people, retail meats, and food animals. The Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network, "FoodNet," was established in 1996 and accomplishes its work through active surveillance; surveys of laboratories, physicians, and the general population; and population-based epidemiologic studies. The interagency foodborne outbreak response collaboration (IFORC) among the three agencies improves coordination of Federal foodborne-outbreak responsibilities. The IFORC steering committee met in April 2024 to discuss reoccurring, emerging, and persisting pathogen strains, after-action reviews, and information sharing. The three agencies play significant roles in the integrated foodborne outbreak response management meetings that integrate knowledge from laboratorians, epidemiologists, and environmental health professionals to discuss foodborne disease surveillance and outbreak response.

In 2024, FSIS contributed to the planning of and participated in the national meeting in Washington, D.C. Each year the meetings bring together Federal, State, and local officials to network and share knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned from past outbreaks, which help the national public health network build stronger connections and practices.

The interagency food safety analytics collaboration (IFSAC) addresses cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use. IFSAC includes members from each agency and focuses on foodborne illness source attribution—the process of estimating the most common food sources responsible for specific foodborne illnesses. In 2024, IFSAC posted its annual attribution report and continued progressing on projects aimed to enhance foodborne illness source attribution estimates by improving and expanding data, analytical methods, and communication activities.

Specific to FSIS' collaboration with FDA, the two agencies work hand-in-hand to address issues arising from findings of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in meat and poultry products or live food-producing animals. In 2024, FSIS and FDA continued to test a variety of food products for PFAS and jointly review and monitor the data. The agencies developed a shared internal process for responding to detections of PFAS in meat and poultry products and are significant contributors to the larger government-wide emphasis on PFAS.

5.2.2 Gen-FS

The Genomics for Food and Feed Safety (Gen-FS) consortium is another collaboration among FSIS, CDC, and FDA, as well as ARS, APHIS, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Gen-FS helps to harmonize approaches to WGS among these agencies in the detection and characterization of pathogens and the identification of their sources. Through this collaboration, FSIS has improved its food safety systems by enhancing the ability to identify outbreaks, alert the public, and identify gaps in FSIS-regulated food safety systems that would not otherwise be recognized. In 2024 Gen-FS worked to get new virulence gene targets for *Salmonella* added to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) database. Moving forward, all *Salmonella* isolates submitted to NCBI pathogen browser will be analyzed for these virulence genes, allowing for easier data mining for virulence-related projects. Additionally, a new Gen-FS workgroup was created to cover the topic of metagenomics—the study of genetic material from microorganisms in a given environment—which will focus on harmonizing methods, data standards, and communication of metagenomics data among participating agencies.

5.2.3 Research and Studies

While FSIS is not a research funding organization, it recognizes the importance of scientific endeavors that may advance food safety related to the Agency's mission. FSIS annually updates its list of research priorities and data gaps based on laboratory data, field findings, and outbreak information. In 2024, FSIS continued to work with ARS to address research needs, including projects related to H5N1 avian influenza in cattle. FSIS laboratories introduced a method for detecting avian influenza in muscle tissue. ARS research led to an improved method for identifying STEC being introduced into FSIS laboratories in 2024, saving resources, while maintaining sensitivity, specificity and accuracy of results. FSIS also worked with ARS to evaluate a more rapid method for *Lm*, which will be implemented into the FSIS laboratories in 2025.

In November 2023, FSIS initiated a 1-year sampling program of domestic beef, pork, and Siluriformes fish to determine levels of dioxins and dioxin-like compounds. Dioxins are a group of compounds of public health concern that are found in the environment, generally occurring at very low levels as persistent environmental contaminants. FSIS has been periodically monitoring dioxins in regulated products since the 1990s and has been able to observe changes in human dietary exposure to dioxins. Samples are collected by FSIS inspection program personnel and are sent to ARS for analysis. Other Federal partners, including EPA and FDA, contribute to the study design and follow-up.

Regarding the Agency's work related to safe handling instructions (SHI) on product labels, in 2024 FSIS completed the study designed to test consumer responses to potential revisions to the SHI label. This study adds to an extensive body of research already commissioned by FSIS on the SHI label. Results of the study were released in May 2025.

5.3 Raise Consumer Awareness of Food Safety

FSIS' actions to protect public health extend to consumers through strategic outreach and education activities. In addition to participating in events and pitching food safety topics to the media, FSIS disseminates educational resources through its website and social media platforms, including X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. These tools allow FSIS to provide real-time updates on policies, research, and recalls; share information and resources to improve consumer understanding and daily practices; and advance public knowledge and trust by providing examples of the different ways FSIS carries out its mission.

Meanwhile, FSIS customer service representatives on the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline receive and respond to inquiries from consumers about how to keep their food safe. FSIS hotline representatives respond to inquiries through a toll-free phone number, live chat, email, and self-service information database through AskUSDA. During 2024, FSIS responded to nearly 11,000 inquiries, and more than 9.8 million customers accessed the self-service resource database. The database streamlines functionality across all platforms by allowing consumers to find answers to common questions at their own pace. It also conserves Agency resources by allowing hotline staffers more time to focus on newer or more intricate questions in a timely manner.

The Agency also continued to develop and nurture external strategic partnerships. In 2024, online grocery delivery service, Instacart, agreed to double the amount of FSIS food safety content, including FSIS holiday campaigns, that it promotes across its social media platforms, reaching a cumulative audience of more than 614,000 users. FSIS further leveraged its partnership with Instacart by accepting an invitation to facilitate a discussion among Instacart's E-Commerce food delivery partners at the International Association of Food Protection in July 2024. FSIS led a panel that included Uber and Instacart to discuss "Managing Delivery Risks Through People and Processes." FSIS established new partnerships in 2024 with Giant Food Stores, which featured FSIS Super Bowl food safety tips in a full-page layout of its January 2024 in-store magazine, as well as with Northeast Valley Health Corporation to distribute FSIS public health social media messaging to its network of community health centers—one of the nation's largest health center systems—in communities in Los Angeles County, California.

FSIS proactively pitched media outlets to share vital food safety information, reaching more than 117 million consumers through numerous high-profile outlets. Annual food events, holidays, and emergency situations such as power outages and natural disasters continued to spark consumer inquiries, FoodKeeper app downloads, and food thermometer requests. FSIS' FoodKeeper mobile app remains a relevant, useful, and effective tool to educate consumers on proper food storage of more than 680 foods, safe food handling behaviors, and food waste. Since its launch in 2015, the app has downloaded nearly 2 million times, including more than 73,000 downloads in 2024.

In 2024, FSIS continued to enhance communication of key information and analyses among FSIS employees, consumers, industry, government partners, and other stakeholders. Through its weekly Constituent Update newsletter, FSIS highlighted policy, programmatic, and consumer education updates relevant to more than 57,000 subscribers that include industry, consumers, academia, and the media.

AGENCY-WIDE PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The Office of Planning, Analysis and Risk Management (OPARM) leads FSIS in performance management including, strategic planning, evaluation, evidence, and enterprise risk management (ERM) activities. OPARM actively engages internal and external stakeholders and works directly with Agency leadership and OBPA to ensure performance and evidence activities support the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 and the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010. OPARM participates in both the Performance, Evidence, Evaluation, and Risk Committee (PEER), which is comprised of individuals from different Mission Areas and backgrounds throughout USDA. OPARM works closely with the Chief Evaluation Officer and Chief Data Scientist to ensure evaluation, evidence, and risk activities align. All evaluation, evidence, and risk management activities are approved through FSIS' governance process, including the Enterprise Steering Board, Office of the Administrator, and Management Council.

Alignment to USDA Strategic Plan

FSIS activities contribute to the success of USDA's overall mission to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues using sound public policy, the best available science, and effective management, to the benefit of all Americans. USDA is currently developing the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan and will report alignment in the 2027 Explanatory Notes.

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

USDA is currently developing the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, including new KPIs. A more detailed report of the performance plan can be found at https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/performance.